



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

March 9, 2015, Public Hearing

Support for:

SB 1042 AAC MUNICIPAL OPTIONS FOR ELECTIONS

Opposition to:

HB6900 AAC ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

HB 6950 AAC REFORMS TO ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Comments submitted by Yvonne D. Senturia, Election Laws Specialist

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SB 1042 AAC MUNICIPAL OPTIONS FOR ELECTIONS

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization committed to the active involvement of citizens in their government and improving the electoral process. The League believes in the implementation of voting systems that are secure, accurate, recountable and accessible (SARA) in order to ensure the integrity of, and voter confidence in, elections. We support consideration of a broad range of options that meet SARA criteria and keep pace with evolving technology.

SB1042 would, under appropriate guidelines, allow the use of electronic equipment to conduct post-election audits. The University of Connecticut has been working on developing a system that would be able to read ballots and compile results similar to what human beings do as part of the existing manual post-election audit. Demonstrations have been promising, and the Secretary of the State has been working on specifications and certification standards for this equipment and a plan for how it would be deployed. We support allowing use of this equipment, assuming that the technology meets SARA criteria.

HB6900 AAC ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The League believes in assurance that absentee voting privileges are available to all, and in stronger measures to protect the absentee ballot from fraud and undue influence.

Currently, if twenty or more absentee ballot applications are received from the same street address, registrars of voters have discretion to supervise absentee ballot voting, using the procedures for supervised absentee voting at institutions. HB6900 would eliminate all discretionary absentee ballot supervision. With no rationale having been stated for removing

this discretionary ability from registrars, we would urge the Committee to continue to allow registrars discretionary absentee ballot supervision, in the interest of protection from undue influence.

HB 6950 AAC REFORMS TO ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The League believes in the right to vote with confidence in the election process and adoption of procedures to minimize voter inconvenience. The proposed changes to how to handle overvoting for a cross-endorsed candidate place an undue burden on voters, whose ballots clearly indicate the candidate they wish to elect. When a voter has cast a vote for cross-endorsed candidates on each party line where the candidate is listed, it is clear who they want to vote for. If the voter cannot stay and fill out a second ballot, HB6950 would make it possible for these very decided voters to have their vote lost for their candidate, because of the variation in how these ballots are handled at the end of the night at the polls. The proposed changes risk loss of votes for candidates, and disenfranchise absentee voters, overseas and military ballots.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on these bills.